Greetings All:

I am compiling this E-Book on Japanese Edible Plants as I recently tried to Research some of the Wild Edible Plants of Japan and could not find any Books on the subject. I could only find Internet Websites that posted such information.

So this is a Little E-Booklet on Wild Edible Plants of Japan for all to have as a Free Download.

Enjoy!

Asian Royal Fern ‘Zenmai’ (Osmunda Japonica):

It is a Deciduous Herbaceous Plant which produces separate Fertile and Sterile Fronds. The Sterile Fronds are spreading, up to 80–100 cm tall, Bipinnate, with Pinnae 20–30 cm long and Pinnules 4–6 cm long and 1.5–2 cm broad; the Fertile Fronds are Erect and Shorter, 20–50 cm tall.

It grows in Moist Woodlands and can tolerate Open Sunlight only if in Very Wet Soil. Like other Ferns, it has No Flowers, but rather Elaborate Sporangia, that very superficially might suggest a Flower, from which the Alternative Name Derives.

Spores are best Sown as soon as they are Ripe on the surface of a Humus-Rich Sterilized Soil in a Lightly Shaded Place in a Greenhouse. Keep the Compost Moist, preferably by putting a Plastic Bag over the Pot. Plants develop very rapidly, Pot on small Clumps of Plantlets as soon as they are large enough to handle and keep humid until they are well established. Do not Plant Outside until

the Ferns are at least 2 Years Old. Cultivars usually come true to type. Division of the Rootstock in the Dormant Season. This is a Very Strenuous Exercise due to the mass of Wiry Roots.

There is No Medicinal Value that is Known of with this Plant.

Bracken (*Pteridium Aquilinum):*

Warabi-mochi is made with bracken

Bracken (Warabi) are found across Japan in the Spring, from Mountainsides to Woodlands. Easy to access, they have been a Popular Foraged Food in Japan for Centuries, with both the Leaves and Stalks Edible. Traditionally they are made into Warabi Mochi, a Dark, Sweet Mochi that is typically served with Dark Kokuto Sugar. Otherwise, they can be Blanched and Cooked into Rice, Salads and Stir-Fries.

An oil is extracted from the rhizome of this Fern, which, as far back as the times of Theophrastus and Dioscorides, was known as a valuable vermifuge, and its use has in modern times been widely revived. The Liquid Extract is one of the best Anthelmintics against Tapeworm, which it Kills and Expels. It is usual to administer this Worm Medicine last thing at night, after several hours of Fasting, and to give a Purgative such as Castor Oil, first thing in the Morning. A Single

Sufficient Dose will often Cure at once. The Powder (or the Fluid Extract) may be taken, but the Ethereal Extract, or Oleoresin, if given in Pill Form, is the more pleasant way of taking it.

The Drug is Much Employed for similar purposes by Veterinary Practitioners. In the Powdered Form, the Dose varies from 60 to 180 grains, taken in Honey or Syrup, or Infused in Half a Teacupful of Boiling Water. The Dose often given is Too Small, and Failure is then due to the Smallness of the Dose. In Too Large Doses, however, it is an Irritant Poison, causing Muscular Weakness and Coma, and has been proved particularly Injurious to the Eyesight, even causing Blindness.

The Older Herbalists considered that the Roots, Bruised and Boiled in Oil or Lard, made a good Ointment for Healing Wounds, and that the Powdered Roots Cured Rickets in Children.'

Bracken contains the Carcinogenic Compound Ptaquiloside, which causes Damage to DNA, thus leading to Cancers of the Digestive Tract. High Stomach Cancer Rates are found in Japan and North Wales where Bracken is often Eaten, but it is unclear whether Bracken plays a role.

The Butterbur ‘(Petasites Hybridus):

The Highly Nutritious Butterbur (Fuki) is a Calcium-Rich Perennial and a Classic Member of the Sansai Clan. Found in Moist or Swampy Environments, often near Streams or Ponds, it is recognizable thanks to its Large Flat Leaves.

The Stalks have a Bitter Taste and are commonly mixed with Rice, or simply Sautéed and Eaten with Salt. The Buds, known as Fuki-no-to, can be Chopped up for Butterbur Miso.

The Butterbur Herb is a Stout Perennial Herb arising from a Coarse Rhizome and having a Hollow, Thick, Reddish-Brown Leafless Areal Stem, covered with Lance-Shaped Scales and Terminating in a Dense Club-Shaped Cluster of Flower Heads. Large Leaves, up to 2/3rds of a Meter, and are Spiky around the Edges. The Lilac-Pink Flowers of the Butterbur are Small and Tubular. Because the Leaves are Big Enough to Protect a Person's Head from Sun or Rain, the Greeks used the Butterbur as a "Hat Plant." The name of the Broad-Brimmed Hat, somewhat like a Sombrero, was worn by Travelers in Greco-Roman times was Petasos, and the Plant Name derived from it survives in Botanical Usage. The Leaves are Harvested in Early Summer, the Root in Late Summer to Autumn. Both can be Dried for later use.

Butterbur is Widely Considered to be an Effective Cough Remedy and Recent Experiments have shown it to have Remarkable Antispasmodic and Pain-Relieving Properties. Butterbur has been used mainly to Treat Chest Problems such as Bronchitis, Asthma, and Whooping Cough.

The Root and the Leaves are an Analgesic, Antispasmodic, Cardiotonic, Diaphoretic and Diuretic. A Decoction is taken as a Remedy for Various Respiratory Problems such as Asthma, Colds, Bronchitis and Whooping Cough and also other Complaints such as Fevers and Urinary Complaints. It is also Very Effective in the Treatment of Gastrointestinal Complaints and Biliary Dyskinesia.

Externally it can be used as a Poultice to Speed the Healing of Wounds and Skin Eruptions. A homeopathic remedy is made from the roots. It is used in the treatment of severe and obstinate neuralgia.

Butterbur acts on the Bile Ducts, Stomach and Duodenum. Butterbur Root is also Medicinally Employed as a Cardiac Heart Stimulant.

The Butterbur does have some Contraindications as it contains Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids which when Isolated are Toxic to the Liver. Because the Herbal Plant contains Potentially Toxic Alkaloids its Internal Use cannot be Recommended.

Evening Primrose ‘Matsuyoigusa’ (Oenothera Biennis):

Came to Japan in the Kaei Period (1848-1853) and was initially Planted for Ornamental Purposes, but later Escaped and became Wild. A Biennial the Plants Heights can be 30 - 90 cm . The Stems are often Colored Purple-Brown and Sparsely Hairy. The Leaves are Dark Green with a prominent White Central Vein. The Leaf Mmargin has Sparse Wavy Serrations.

The Bark and the Leaves are Astringent and Sedative. They have proved of use in the Treatment of Gastro-Intestinal Disorders of Whooping Cough and Asthma. A Syrup made from the Flowers is also an Effective Treatment for Whooping Cough. The Bark is stripped from the Flowering Stem and Dried for later use. The Leaves are also Harvested and Dried at this time.
Research suggests that the Oil is potentially very valuable in the Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis, Pre-Menstrual Tension and Hyperactivity. It is also taken Internally in the Treatment of Eczema, Acne, Brittle Nails, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Alcohol-Related Liver Damage. Regular Consumption of the Oil helps to Reduce Blood Cholesterol Levels and Lower Blood Pressure.

The Seed is a good source of Gamma-Linolenic Acid which is an Unsaturated Fatty Acid which assists the Production of Hormone-Like Substances.

The Poulticed Root is applied to Piles and Bruises. A Tea made from the Roots is used in the Treatment of Obesity and Bowel Pains.

The Root is Cooked. Boiled and Eaten. Fleshy, Sweet and Succulent. Wholesome and Nutritious. A Peppery Taste. The Taste somewhat resembles Parsnips.

The Young Shoots are Raw or Cooked. Mucilaginous, with a Peppery Flavour, they are best used sparingly.

The Flowers are Sweet. Used in Salads or as a Garnish.

The Young Seedpods are Cooked or Steamed. The Seed contains 28% of a Drying Oil. It is Edible and a Very Good Source of Gamma-Linolenic Acid, an Essential Fatty Acid that is not found in many Plant Sources and has Numerous Vital Functions in the Body. The Seed is Very Small and difficult to Harvest, it has to be done by hand. Overall yields are low, making the Oil Very Expensive to produce.

Japanese Garlic ‘Nobiru’ (Allium Macrostemon):

Also known as Japanese Wild Onion, Spring Onion, Green Onion, Chinese Garlic, Japanese Garlic or Long-Stamen Onion. It is a Species of Wild Onion widespread across much of East Asia. Japanese Garlic Produces One Round Bulb up to 2 cm in Diameter. The Scape is up to 70 cm Tall. Leaves are Long and Hollow. Umbel is Large and Crowded with many Pale Red or Pale Purple Flowers.

Along with the Leaves, the Stems that Grow like Leeks and the Bulbs that form Underground are Edible, and the Bulbs with a Crispy Texture can be Eaten Raw. The Young Shoots are Dug Up along with the Bulbs and used and the Best Time to Harvest is February to March in the Sunny Pool and April to May in other Places. The Bulb can be 5 - 10 cm Underground. The Bulbs called "Tama" can be Collected and Eaten all year round. But it is generally said that Spring is the Season (May-July).

The Bulb is Dug Up in the Summer and Dried in the Sun to become a Herbal Medicine. It is also called Mountain Garlic. It is said to be as Effective at Preventing Angina Pain and Loss of Appetite due to Overeating. It is known that the daily amount of 3-5 grams of Leek White is Boiled down with about 600 cc of Water until it is Halved and the Juice is taken in Three Doses]. Nobiru is expected to have the effect of strengthening the Gastrointestinal Tract and Warming the Body.

As a Folk Remedy, it is said to be Effective for Tonic, Antitussive, Ttonsillitis and Pharyngitis. It is known that the Dried Blackened Powder of the Bulb is taken in Sugar Water.

As an External Medicine, it is said that the Antibacterial Effect of Sulfur-Containing Compounds can speed up Healing against Worms, Swellings and Insect Bites.

Japanese Horse-Chestnut ‘Tochi No Ki’ (Aesculus Turbinata):

The Japanese Horse-Chestnut ‘Tochi No Ki’ has played an important part in History. Its High-Calorie content — more Calories per 100g than Rice — helped stave off Famine during the Edo Period.

Easily Cultivated, this Tall Pale Tree can be found in Cities as well as the Countryside, is recommended for some Urban Foraging. Popular Recipes include Tempura and Miso Soup.

Young Leaves Cooked. Some Caution is advised on this entry since the Leaves are likely to contain Toxic Saponins. It can be Dried, Ground into a Flour and used as a Gruel. The Starch is Extracted and Eaten. The Seed is quite Large, about 25 - 30mm in diameter, and is easily Harvested. The Chestnuts needs to be Leached of Saponin Toxins before it becomes Safe to Eat.

The Japanese Horse-Chestnut does not have any Medicinal Benefits.

Japanese Wild Radish ‘Daikon’ (Raphanus Sativus):

Japanese Wild Radish (Hama-Daikon) is found on Beaches and along Riverbanks in Early Spring. It has a Delicate White and Purple Flower on top of its Long Stalks. The Root is Best Harvested before the Plant Flowers.

A Common Recipe for the Japanese Wild Radish is to Fry it, after Soaking it in Salt Water to remove the Bitterness. Raw Daikon is about 95% Water, 4% Carbohydrates, and less than 1% each of Protein and Fat.

The Diakon Wild Radish Roots stimulate the Appetite and Digestion, having a Tonic and Laxative effect upon the Intestines and indirectly stimulating the flow of Bile. Consuming Diakon Radish generally results in improved Digestion, but some People are Sensitive to its Acridity and Robust Action. The Plant is used in the Treatment of Intestinal Parasites, though the part of the Plant used is not specified.

The Leaves, Seeds and Old Roots are used in the Treatment of Asthma and other Chest Complaints. The Juice of the Fresh Leaves is Diuretic and Laxative. The Seed is Carminative, Diuretic, Expectorant, Laxative and Stomachic. It is taken Internally in the Treatment of Indigestion, Abdominal Bloating, Wind, Acid Regurgitation, Diarrhea and Bronchitis. The Root is Antiscorbutic, Antispasmodic, Sstringent, Cholagogue, Digestive and Diuretic.

It is Crushed and used as a Poultice for Burns, Bruises and Smelly Feet. Radishes are also an Excellent Food Remedy for Stone, Gravel and Scorbutic Conditions. Its use is not recommended if the Stomach or Intestines are Inflamed. The Plant contains Raphanin, which is Antibacterial and Antifungal. It Inhibits the Growth of Staphylococcus Aureus, E. coli, Streptococci and Pneumococci. The Plant also shows Anti-Tumour Activity.

The Mugwort ‘Yomogi’ (Artemisia Vulgaris):

Mugwort ‘Yomogi’ is found all over Japan. From mountains to fields, mugwort is a sturdy plant and can thrive anywhere there is sun. Mugwort has slender leaves and a distinct aroma. In the past, mugwort was used for medicinal purposes such as aiding digestion and boosting energy. Nowadays it is more commonly found adding a green color and distinct flavor to Japanese confectionery such as yomogi mochi and other traditional rice-based sweets.

Foragers can make yomogi tempura or add it to soups and rice. Picked fresh, it can also be eaten raw.

The Mugwort is a Shrubby Perennial with Dark Green Deeply Indented Leaves and with Several Clusters of Small Reddish or Yellow Flower Heads. The

Mugwort Herb can grow up to 1 m in height. This Herbal Plant has been known since Ancient Times, and Roman Soldiers used Mugwort inside their Sandals, so that their Feet could remain Fresh while Marching. This Herbal Shrub was also used by Ancient Europeans and Asians in Treating Various Ailments. The Mugwort has a Long History of use in Herbal Medicine especially in matters connected to the Digestive System, Menstrual Complaints and the Treatment of Worms. The Leaves are Harvested in August and can be Dried for later use. The Roots are Harvested in the Autumn and are also dried for later use.

All parts of the Herbal Plant are an Anthelmintic, Antiseptic, Antispasmodic, and a Carminative. It is also a Cholagogue, Diaphoretic, Digestive, Emmenagogue, Expectorant. Along with that, it is a Nervine, Purgative, Stimulant, a Slight Tonic and used in the Treatment of Women's Complaints as well.

The Mugwort Leaves are said to be an Appetizer, Diuretic, Diaphoretic, Haemostatic and Stomachic. They can be used Internally or Externally. An Infusion of the Leaves and Flowering Tops is used in the Treatment of Nervous and Spasmodic Affections, Sterility, and Functional Bleeding of the Uterus. The Leaves are also a Dysmenorrhoea, Asthma and Diseases of the Brain. The Leaves have an Antibacterial Action, inhibiting the Growth of various Intestinal Bacterial Afflictions and helps to Eliminate of Worms From the Body. The Juice as well as Infusion of the Herb were given for Intermittent and Sever Fevers.

The leaves are Indeed Good for being Placed inside Shoes or Boots being Soothing for Sore Feet. As a Nervine, Mugwort is Valued in Palsy, Fits, Epileptic and similar Afflictions, being an Old-Fashioned Popular Remedy for Epilepsy. The Leaves are also used in Herbal Baths in order to get full Invigorating Property to the Water.

The Wise Japanese have been using Mugwort for Centuries now, and one of its best known uses is in the Ancient Art of Acupuncture, where the Heat from a Burning Roll of Chopped Mugwort Leaves in the shape of a Cigar is applied on certain selected points on the Patient’s Body. This Therapy is used as one of the Main Ingredients "Moxibustion".

The Stem is also said to be an Antirheumatic, Antispasmodic, and are said to be one of the Best Stomachics.

The Roots are a Tonic and Antispasmodic.

Wild Chervil ‘Matsuba’ (Cryptotaenia Japonica):

Touted by the Japanese King of Foraging himself, Tomomichi Yamashita, the Wild Chervil (aka Cow Parsley, or Shiku in Japanese) is a Deliciously Fragrant Plant used to keep Digestion running smoothly. Found commonly across Mountains and in Woodlands, it is also known as “Gastro Parsley.” Recipe-Wise, it can be used in Tempura and also makes a great addition to Pasta Dishes.

Cryptotaenia Japonica has both a Clinary and Traditional Medical Uses. It is Raised as a Seasoning (similar to Angelica). Like Parsley, the Flavor is Clean and Refreshing with a slightly Bitter Taste which some describe as Celery-Like. The Sprouts are used in Salads and Soup.

Helps with Women's Complaints. Used in the Treatment of Haemorrhages, Colds & Fevers. Helps to Reduce Inflammation and Supports Overall Heart Function. Rich in Vitamin C and other Antioxidants, Wild Chervil can promote Healthy Glowing Skin by Fighting Free Radicals that cause Aging and Skin Damage. Wild Chervil contains anti-inflammatory compounds and antioxidants, which may help reduce acne and improve skin texture when consumed or applied topically.

Low in Calories but high in Fiber, Wild Chervil can be a great addition to a Weight-Loss Diet. It helps with Digestion and keeps you feeling full for longer. Packed with Vitamins and Minerals, Wild Chervil is said to Support Hair Health by promoting Strong Hair Rrowth and reducing Hair Fall due to its Antioxidant Properties.

White Nettle ‘Odorikosou’ (Lamium Album):

The Plant is Harvested in the Summer and can be Dried for later use. More Commonly called White Dead-Nettle is a Flowering Plant in the Family Lamiaceae. It is Native throughout Europe and Asia growing in a variety of Habitats from open Grassland to Woodland generally on Moist Fertile Soils. It is a Rhizomatous Herbaceous Perennial Plant growing to 70 cm with Green Four-Angled Stems. The Leaves are 3–8 cm Long and 2–5 cm Broad, are Triangular with a Rounded Base, is Softly Hairy and with a Serrated Margin and a Petiole up to 5 cm Long. Like many other members of the Lamiaceae, they appear Superficially Similar to those of the Stinging Nettle Urtica Dioica but Does Not Sting hence the Common Name'Dead-Nettle'. The Flowers are White and are Produced in Whorls on the Upper Part of the Stem with the Individual Flowers 1.5–2.5 cm Long.

White Dead Nettle is an Astringent and Demulcent Herb that is chiefly used as a Uterine Tonic to arrest Inter-Menstrual Bleeding and to reduce Excessive Menstrual Flow. It is a Traditional Treatment for Abnormal Vaginal Discharge and is sometimes taken to Relieve Painful Periods. An Infusion is used in the Treatment of Kidney and Bladder Complaints, Diarrhoea, Menstrual Problems, Bleeding After Childbirth, Vaginal Discharges and Prostatitis.

The Flowering Tops are Antispasmodic, Astringent, Cholagogue, Depurative, Diuretic, Expectorant, Haemostatic, Hypnotic, Pectoral, Resolvent, Sedative, Styptic, Tonic, Vasoconstrictor and a Vulnerary.

Externally, the Plant is made into Compresses and applied to Piles, Varicose Veins and Vaginal Discharges. A Distilled Water from the Flowers and :eaves makes an Excellent and Effective Eye Lotion to Relieve Ophthalmic Conditions.

A Homeopathic Remedy is made from the Plant. It is used in the Treatment of Bladder and Kidney Disorders and Amenorrhoea.

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